[Rajasevapravina M. K. Nilakanta Aiyar.]

Now, with regard to the stoppage of the manufacture of salt that subject can be fully dealt with when we deal with the Departmental budget. As there is now 40 lakhs of maunds of salt available in the factories and the annual consumption in this State comes to about 12 to 13 lakhs of maunds only. It was with a view to avoid the salt already manufactured, being destroyed that provision had to be made to control over-production. I learn that in Madras it is usual to make such arrangements, on occasions when there is over production.

MR. K. NARAYANAPERUMAL NADAR: Is there not a proposal to sell Travancore salt outside?

THE DEWAN-PRESIDENT'S CONCLUDING REMARKS.

PRESIDENT: Fellow-Members of the Legislature,

Under Rule 70 of the Travancore Legislative Rules I am given an opportunity to make a few remarks at the termination of the general discussion; and it has been a convention that these remarks should be confined to the observations let fall by the honourable members in regard to important matters.

I shall take first Mr. Narayanaperumal Nadar's speech. Honourable members will be glad to learn that this Government are alive to the necessity of selling our surplus salt. Time was when we did not produce enough salt for our own consumption; but, fortunately, we are now producing more salt than is needed for the requirements of this State, and, thanks to the research which has been utilised and the wise enterprise brought to bear on that venture our salt is getting to be more and more refined and purer. The question presented itself before this Government as to how it was possible to utilise that surplus salt apart from the possibilities of the chemical industry which we are contemplating. I am glad to be able to tell this honourable house that we have received the utmost possible assistance from the Government of India in this matter, an assistance which I must acknowledge with gratitude when we consider that they are in a sense our competitors, as they themselves are very large producers of salt. They have indicated to us the markets where they will allow us to sell our surplus salt. I am not able to give more details publicly; but I am looking forward to the enterprise and the initiative of the manufacturers of salt to take advantage of those offers which have been communicated to them and to see to it that their business initiative and business push results in the sale of the extra salt.

Now, to my main business. It was a matter—I am saying it in no formal sense—it was a matter of sincere gratification to me, and the Government must acknowledge this with gratitude, that the lines on which this Budget has proceeded, which in turn reflects what may be called the net results of the administration during the past year; have commanded the general acceptance of this house. Certain compliments were paid to the Head of the Administration. But I should take this opportunity—again in no conventional sense—to disclaim either priority or monopoly in respect of those compliments. But for

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the fact that I have been assisted by a body of public servants who are equal to any with whom I have collaborated in my official life, it would not have been possible to produce the results that have actually been turned out. I am saying that deliberately in view of certain remarks let fall by a member or two. I have, as honourable members perhaps know, experience of the secretariat and of officials not only in the local Government but also in the Central Government and it has been my peculiar advantage to have worked within and along with the secretariats elsewhere outside this country; and I can say, with no fear of contradiction, that the public servants of Travancore do not yield to any one, either in their zeal or in their efficiency. I am known to be somewhat of a slave-driver; I am known to exact hard work—I do not stint hard work myself—but on no occasion have I called for effort which has not been forthcoming. I must pay a special tribute to Mr. Sundararajan who was mainly responsible for the idea of that Budget Memorandum, the utility and the efficacy of which, I see, have been gladly admitted by this house. He has left us because the Government of India wanted him; but I must place on record my sense of obligation to his ready resourcefulness and his wide knowledge. At the same time I cannot let this occasion pass without complimenting sincerely Mr. Rama Varier for the work that he has done at a juncture when he had very little time before him for the purpose of the preparation of the Budget; and I must commend him for the very satisfactory manner in which he has prepared the Budget and presented it before this honourable house.

I do not propose within the time that I shall allot to myself to speak on all the matters which have formed the subjects of discussion. There are three matters however, which I cannot let pass without comment. I have been a lawyer and one of the underlying prepossessions of the lawyer is the desire that the executive should not impinge upon the preserves of the law, that the executive government should not interfere directly or indirectly with the working of the judiciary or the tenure and the security of office of the members of the judiciary. It was solely and simply because I found that the trade and commerce of this country were hampered and jeopardised, that the public reputation of this country was in danger of being besmirched, that people were getting averse to embark upon business or to enter into financial transactions within this country because of the laws' delays, that I had to swallow my principles and I had to say that even judicial officers will have to justify their continued existence and justify their preferment by turning out a minimum amount of work at a definite pace. I know that the quantum of work that a judge does is no uniform index of the intensity or the quality of that work. But the need was so great, the urgency so vital, that Government had no alternative to laying down and enforcing the rule that has been referred to.

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[President].

I now turn to the commercial departments. There again honourable members will forgive me if I speak autobiographically. I had some experience of commercial departments. When in the province of Madras, certain commercial departments were started, and I started some and failed in some, though it was given to me to succeed in one or two. Throughout that period there was always, and justifiably, a fear that Government might bungle in these departments. As I have often said, Governments are not good businessmen. But there is one thing which I advocated on the floor of the Madras Legislature, there is one thing which, with the permission of this honourable house, I would reiterate before this honourable house, and that is that in all commercial departments there must be patience. No department will yield profits at once ; it will probably result in a loss to start with. But if the idea underlying the department is correct, my principle has been to trust the man at the head of the department until and unless I find that he does not deserve that trust and then I have no compunction in making the necessary changes. I shall therefore proceed on that principle ; and I trust that this honourable house will give me the support that I need for the purpose of allowing people to make initial mistakes if they be *bonafide*, of making all possible allowances for errors of judgment and calculation so long as honesty, zeal and enthusiasm are displayed. If at the end of a given period that confidence is found to be misplaced, that zeal is found to be mischievous or that enthusiasm impetuous, then it will be time to take action.

With these prefatory observations, may I advert to one or two departments? The Ceramic Department has come in for a lot of criticism. I want honourable members to remember that the person in charge of that department is an expert in pottery. He does not pretend to be, and is not, a businessman or an organiser of business. If he is not a businessman or an organiser of business, the Government are perhaps less even of organisers of business, and somebody had to be in charge of that business. He has made mistakes, and nobody has been harder on him than I have been. But I must say that he has produced fine results. He has brought about by means of his refining appliances and his experienced skill a state of things in which it can be confidently asserted that the raw material, the clay that he has produced there is now acclaimed to be the best possible in India. The proof of it I shall give by means of an anecdote without mentioning names. There was a competitor in the field who wandered about the country interviewing high and low, pointing out the mistakes and the short-comings of the Ceramic Expert and stating that this factory might close at any time, that Government were anxious to hand it over to somebody and that therefore there was no point and some risk in placing orders with that department. Propaganda was necessary, personally on my own part and through other sources. I am glad to be able to say that even the originators of that propaganda are now asking for our clay and making offers which we are considering. They have been forced to confess that it is not possible for them to obtain clay equal to the clay that we have here. Then, with

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regard to the quality of the manufactured product, the Government of India have been bombarded with requests from various sources in regard to materials like cups and saucers, insulators and other electrical appliances, fire-bricks and so forth. And, naturally people do not place large orders without deliberation. Even our Water Works Department and the Public Works Department did not want to take the articles produced in the factory because they have been accustomed to certain standards, to a certain perfection of technique which may not be attainable in our own indigenous enterprise, to start with. To start with there was internecine warfare; one department rather sniffing at the products of the Ceramic Factory and the Expert anxious, arduously persuasive with the Head of the Administration, exclaiming that he was an injured and innocent person. Now a kind of compromise has been arrived at with the result that the two departments have accepted the principle of living and letting live so that even Travancore departments are purchasing Travancore goods. I am glad to say that the Government of India have been a little more sympathetic and have placed large orders with us. So far as the profit of that department is concerned, I have absolutely no doubt about it, because it is not possible for that factory working at full time to produce as much as we are asked to turn out. But that is not to say that I am thoroughly satisfied with the working of the department. I mean that there are many items in which improvements are necessary and that there are many ways in which more businesslike methods could be introduced. There must be many orientations and reorientations, many changes, perhaps of personnel, perhaps also ultimately a change in the method of management. But as to the success of the factory itself and the concern, I have absolutely no doubt. I trust that honourable members will take my assurance, especially coming from one who is not too optimistic—although I am an optimist by temperament,—of any enterprise sponsored by any Government.

I now come to the Transport Department. The Transport Department figuratively and literally knocks against every man in the street, sometimes knocks the man in the street down; and therefore it is but natural that the activities, welcome or otherwise, of the Transport Department should receive very prominent public attention. It is true that the income that might be anticipated from that department has not been as much as might have been earned under more favourable auspices. Some of the reasons for this have been explained by Mr. Salter. But there are certain basic factors which I wish to analyse and to place before this honourable house at this moment. It was for the purpose of enabling me to do this that I requested Mr. Salter this morning to prepare the statement that has been placed before the house. I want to invite the attention of the honourable members to one or two features. The gross capital expenditure, as will be seen from the first page is Rs. 11 lakhs., *i. e.*, Rs. 6 lakhs odd in the first year, Rs. 2¼ lakhs in the second year, Rs. 2 lakhs in the third year and the remaining in the fourth year. We have spent in all Rs. 11 lakhs on the capital activities of the Transport Department.

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[President].

The gross receipts of the depart nent up till now have been Rs 39 lakhs, out of which the working expenses including establishment, fuel etc., come to Rs. 31 lakhs. Now in talking of profits,it is not always borne in mind that we have a depreciation fund and interest on capital. After deducting the depreciation charges which are set out there, depreciation in respect of buildings and rolling stock, which amounts to Rs. 5 lakhs, the net profits come to Rs. 2·66 lakhs. That is 24 percent. of the total outlay. In other words, extending it over the period under reference we have derived an annual average net profit of 6. 8 per cent. There again I do not mean to say that there might not be directions in which that department might not have its usefulness augmented and enhanced, might not have its expenditure more rigorously scrutinised, might not have more amenities provided and might not have more care bestowed upon what may be called the comforts of those who travel within the cars and the safety of those who have to encounter the cars on the road. These are matters to which Government are paying careful attention. But speaking by and large, speaking as a kind of generalisation, it may be said that at a very difficult time, with the rocketing prices of petrol and of spare parts the department which started three years ago and practically as a matter of first instance in India barring Hyderabad, has on the whole justified its existence.

With regard to the Forest Department, I have only this to say—and it may be stated without any doubt—that all the timber that we can produce we can market on account of the present situation and the demands of the Government of India and the various War Departments. All the blackwood and the rosewood that we can produce or that is available has already been sold or bespoken. But much more is necessary than the sale of our stock. A policy of regeneration, a policy of planned reafforestation, a policy of proper forest conservation is necessary. In that policy the co-operation of the public is of the utmost availand importance, and what is more, Government are confronted with the problem of soil erosion and the possibility of disafforestation by deliberate and ignorantly produced forest fires. On account of the imprudent treatment of the slopes of hills a very grave problem now confronts this country. Unless the Government and the people act and collaborate together, it may be that all our hills may become bleak and bare and all the soil will be washed down. It is, I am sorry to say, the short-sightedness of some aristocratic land holders who for the purpose of immediate gain barter away their timber to adventurers who have succeeded in making many hills in Peermade appear like shaven pates, with all the soil washed out into the river, instead of being the verdurous, forest-clad slopes which they were and should be again. Against the follies of short-sighted landowners, against the mischief of the profiteers serious steps may have to be taken; and it is possible that on the lines of what has been done in the United States, legislative proposals will be placed before this house. One great State in the

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United States which was a scene of abundant fertility hundred years ago, is now a desert, an expanding desert because what was forest is now bare sand and that sand is expanding beyond that State to other States. That foolish forest policy has now got to be combated by strict legislation. I trust that legislation will not be necessary; but if it becomes necessary it will have to be resorted to. I have finished what I have to say on these Commercial Departments.

It would be wrong and hypocritical on my part if I close my observations without making some reference to what have been termed the constitutional aspects of my speech at the beginning of this session. It would be correct to say, and I say it with some pride, that I have been and will continue to be a democrat in the sense that I am convinced that no Government can succeed, that no Government can justify itself, that no Government can prosper unless it works in team with, as a humble servant and as a co-adjutor of the public and in furtherance of public interests. In regard to the form and manner in which the will of the people will be expressed through the executive in work which is generally termed administrative activity there may be differences of opinion. I started, like most people in India of my age and my training, by being a great believer in that particular development of the constitution which it has been the glory and prerogative of the British to evolve and to maintain for a very long time. But the responsible Government which was evolved in the 18th century and which was kept at a high level by Gladstone and Disraeli necessarily changed when the basic elements changed. That kind of responsible Government could only have originated, could only sustain itself and could only rejuvenate itself if and so long as there were two parties and not many more, more or less evenly matched in numbers, differing in policies and programmes but alive to the same fundamental needs. If the opposing parties had fundamental divergences or differences with each other, if they were not agreed, for instance on the economic basis of society, if they could not succeed in submerging feelings of mutual or deep-seated rivalry or antagonism, religious, communal or economic, if phenomena like communism, like nationalisation of wealth, like economic overturning of society, appeared on the scene such a system of responsible Government must inevitably break down or be vitally modified. We have seen that there was, even in England and certainly in America, politically responsible Government and democracy but side by side with economic and social oligarchy, inequality and also maldistribution of wealth and of opportunities to which all thinking English and American statesmen and thinkers have paid due advertence. We are now in a new era in the history of the world. It may be that new values will have to be established. It may be that new methods of creating the impact of public opinion on the Government will have to be devised, modelled, remodelled, furbished, and refurbished. I do not on behalf of Government say that one method is better than another. All that I say is that there are certain constitutional reasons, irrefutable in my opinion, impossible to overcome at the present stage, as to why responsible Government in the sense in which England understood it ,under Gladstone

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[President].

and Disraeli would not be a proper way in India and certainly in the State of the expression of the public will and the reflection of the public impulses. The American system has been quoted. There are other methods and means by which the same results can be achieved. It is all a matter for discussion; it is a matter for careful introspection; it is a matter for mutual interchange of views; it is a matter involving the highest qualities of lofty patriotism, selfless endeavour and a common activity towards a common goal. In arriving at this conclusion, in arriving at a *modus vivendi* at what must be essentially a compromise, it must be borne in mind that the very best is not at all times attainable and very often we have to content ourselves with the second best. Travancore, as I said in the beginning of my remarks, will not be behindhand in asking for counsel, in obtaining opinions, in respecting the public will. But it is not an easy problem. It may not be a facile solution. We may have to labour hard and infructuously. We shall certainly make mistakes. But out of mistakes will come the final solution. And let us hope, God willing and under the stimulus and inspiration of a great Ruler some solution may be found by which the people of Travancore may be assured that their will may be expressed and implemented subject to certain indefeasible safeguards which the system of monarchy will always have to impose in order to maintain itself and to maintain the stability of the body politic, so as to prevent it from those inconsistencies, from those ebullitions, from those storms and tempests which are sometimes an accompaniment of demagogy as apart from democracy. I may say at once that Government have already been thinking of these matters and a first attempt was made with regard to the Public Service Committee and the Public Works Department Committee. It may be that ours are not the best methods. It may be that alternative methods may be chosen. But in whatever is done, Government, honourable members may be assured, will be inspired by *bona fides*, by honesty of purpose and by the overmastering desire that a Government which deserves to, and should, maintain the confidence of His Highness should be a Government which would endeavour to serve public interests according to the best of its lights.

The House will now adjourn and meet again tomorrow at 11-o' clock.

The House rose for the day at 5-20 P. M.

V. S. ARUMUKHOM PILLAI,
Secretary to the Sri Mulam Assembly.

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